Proposal to Un-Name Barrows Hall

July 9, 2020

[redacted]
UC Berkeley African American Student Development Office

with research and drafting support from many UC Berkeley students, staff, and faculty

in response to calls for action by the Black Student Union, Black Graduate Student Association, Filipinx and Philippine Studies Working Committees, RECLAIM, and other members of the community

for review by the UC Berkeley Building Name Review Committee

Community Acknowledgement and Campus Process

Students, faculty, and staff have advocated for the campus to rename Barrows Hall in a way that better reflects our Principles of Community. This was outlined very clearly in the "Ten Initial Demands" put forward by the Black Student Union in 2015. Renaming Barrows Hall to dismantle the history of David Prescott Barrows and his views on the Philippines was proposed by participants in the fall 2019 Filipinx Summit at UC Berkeley. This sentiment and rationale has also been discussed in the student press: for example, in a *Daily Californian* feature by Nelly Lin in 2016, in an op-ed published in that paper by Bradley Afroilan and Anthony Williams, in an editorial by the Daily Californian editorial board in 2016, in a piece by Revatti Thatte in 2017, and briefly in a *Daily Californian* editorial in 2020.

Many on the Berkeley campus — including staff in the African American Student Development Office; members of the Black Graduate Student Association, the Black Student Union, the Committee for Philippine Studies, and the student advocacy organization RECLAIM; and individual students past and present such as the artists and activists Anthony Williams and Bradley Afroilan — have devoted significant energy to illuminating the troubling legacy of Barrows Hall's namesake and the ways in which the presence of the name continues to affect members of our community.

For several years, the burden to challenge the name of Barrows Hall has been placed on student activists and staff members (most of whom are Brown or Black). This proposal is grounded in their activism, words, and research. This formal proposal to the UC Berkeley Building Name Review Committee, therefore, is in response to the extensive work of many in our community, more than can be individually acknowledged here. As just one part of the effort to improve our university, we encourage allies of Black and Brown students, faculty, and staff, including the campus administration, to take the initiative to question namesakes of campus buildings and do the work to change symbols that do not represent our Principles of Community.

Introduction to the Namesake

Barrows Hall is named for David Prescott Barrows, who served as president of the University of California from 1919 to 1923 and as a member of the faculty from 1910 to 1942. He also served in key posts under the Philippine Commission, a U.S. government body that exercised colonial control after

the Philippine-American War. A biographical statement from the Bancroft Library pertaining to his life's work is linked here.

Summary of Rationale to Unname Barrows Hall
Throughout his lifetime, Barrows' words and actions were anti-Black, anti-Filipinx, anti-Indigenous, xenophobic, and Anglocentric. His actions form a striking pattern of racism and use of institutional power to repress desire for independence from the United States (Clymer, 1976, p. 510).

Barrows' actions and words advanced the interests of white supremacy, broadly. Continuing to honor Barrows' legacy is especially harmful to Black and Brown students, faculty, and staff and undermines the integrity of our university. It is time to remove his name from Barrows Hall.

Barrows Demonstrated Extreme Anti-Blackness
Barrows argued that Black people are politically incapable, cannot successfully enact self-determination, are vicious, are lacking in free will, and cannot recognize their own rights.

- In "Berbers and Blacks: Impressions of Morocco, Timbuktu, and The Western Sudan," Barrows wrote that the "*[Black] race … is, in general, deficient in political capacity. Its culture produces only despotisms, and these of a singularly brutal type … The black lacks an inherent passion for freedom, the ability to distinguish between what justly may be demanded of him and what is oppression."* (Barrows, 1927, pp. 244-245)

- Barrows also revealed his racist, anti-Black views in an analysis of British colonization in Africa. For example, Barrows wrote, *"The tropical coast comprised in British Nigeria probably had as wicked a history as any part of the African shore, before the British took responsibility for it, and gave it a just and humane government."* (Barrows, 1927, p. 215)

This thorough dehumanization of Blacks is reprehensible.

Barrows Degraded Filipinx People in the Philippines and in the United States
Barrows infantilized and dehumanized Filipinx people and displayed a sense that he was carrying the "white man's burden" as a colonizer. He advocated that nothing short of (white) Anglocentric culture and institutions are able to correct the "subpar" mental faculties he portrayed among the Filipinx.

- Barrows claimed that people in the Phillipine Islands and throughout the region are instinctively submissive. For example, he wrote, *"The poor Malayan instinctively dreads and submits to the power of the stronger, especially where that power is of a material kind, and the Spanish system in its very efforts to advance the population, did much to aggravate these social distinctions."* (Barrows, 1907, p. 72)

- Reflecting on six years of his work in the Philippines, in his 1907 piece, "Education and Social Progress in the Philippines," Barrows argued that the Filipinx were begging to be colonized. He wrote that *"… the desire of the Filipinos for the English language was… strongly felt and*

earnestly plead for." (Barrows, 1907, p. 74)

- In a 1910 article, "What May Be Expected from Education in the Philippines," he wrote,*"Wherever one goes now in the Philippines, ... he will find [children who] can engage [in English], and whose thoughts and ideas have been quickened and raised far above the mental level of the illiterate and ignorant class from which these children spring."* (Barrows, 1910, p. 162)

White Supremacist's View of Global History: Anti-Black and Racist Toward all Indigenous People

In his capacity as the general superintendent of public instruction for the Philippine Islands, Barrows created a textbook for high school students, *A History of the Philippines*, first published in 1905 and used in schools until it was replaced in 1924 (Wesling, 2011, p. 54). Throughout the textbook, Barrows framed a disturbing view of history and race, where people of color are most often considered in relation to whites, and where races can seemingly be ordered in a hierarchy of linear-temporal advancement, relative intelligence, physical attractiveness, and as members of either civil or savage societies.

- Consider this statement from Barrows, building upon his prior statement that history begins with written records: *"Thus, the history of the black, or negro, race begins only with the exploration of Africa by the white race, and the history of the American Indians, except perhaps of those of Peru and Mexico, begins only with the white man's conquest of America. The white, or European, race is, above all others, the great historical race; but the yellow race, represented by the Chinese, has also a historical life and development, beginning many centuries before the birth of Christ."* (Barrows, 1905, p. 13)

These are the views of a white supremacist advancing the interests of white supremacy.

Racist, Anti-Democratic Record and Misuse of Public Education

As Michael Hawkins put it in his paper, *David Barrows and Perceptions of Historical Consciousness in the Colonial Philippines*, "David Barrows' tenure in the colonial Philippines was intimately bound up with discovering and altering the collective minds of the colonized."

- This approach is confirmed in Barrows' testimony before Congress (Senate, 1902, p. 702):

  Senator Rawlins; "What will be the political effect of a thorough understanding of English literature, or American literature, so to speak, upon their aspirations to stand upon a plane of equality with American citizens?"

  Mr. Barrows; "We hope that it will have a beneficial political effect; that is, the more they know of America and Americans and American institutions the more satisfied they will be under American rule."

- Also consider his 1902 testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on the Philippines (Senate, 1902, p. 719):

  Senator Beveridge: "I understand you to say that you never expect to live to see the day when the Filipinos would be capable, as a people, of self-government, as we understand it. Is that understanding of your answer correct?"

  Mr. Barrows: "I do not think the Filipino is yet born who will control, to say nothing of governing justly, the Philippine Islands."

Racism in the Contexts of Immigration and Interracial Marriage

Barrows advanced white supremacist views in the public policy arena well beyond his years as a colonizer in the Phillipines. The late Filipinx-American Studies historian Dawn Mabalon discusses Barrows' racist views toward Filipinx immigrants in her book, *Little Manila Is in the Heart*, which she completed writing while a postdoctoral fellow in UC Berkeley's Department of Ethnic Studies.

- In 1929, the San Francisco Commonwealth Club convened a meeting to debate Filipinx immigration. Mabalon wrote: "The most incendiary testimony came from David Barrows of the University of California, formerly superintendent of schools in Manila and director of education in the Philippines, who confirmed anxieties about Filipina/o racial differences and Filipina/hypersexuality. *'Their vices are almost entirely based on sexual passion,'* he reported. *'The defects of the race are not intellectual but moral, and it is on the moral side that Filipinos require inflexible standards and constant support.'* Despite their reputation as good boxers, he concluded that they were weak and diseased, and he opposed Filipino-white marriage." (Mabalon, 2013, p. 143)

Conclusion

Members of our campus community have, for years, called for the removal of David Prescott Barrows' name from one of Berkeley's prominent academic buildings as just one step toward dismantling and disassociating from white supremacy, in all its forms. Naming a building after a person is an honor, and for Black and Filipinx students and scholars —as well as many others from historically marginalized communities across our campus — the decision to continue honoring Barrows constitutes tacit approval of a significant and lasting legacy of white supremacy, colonialism, and violent oppression. This is harmful, and Barrows cannot stand as a symbol of what we value on the Berkeley campus.

While these additional recommendations are outside the immediate decision regarding whether or not to un-name Barrows Hall, we also want to communicate the following important points:

- **Symbolism is necessary, but not sufficient.** Un-naming a building is an important symbolic step with tangible outcomes. We encourage university and campus leaders to also do the hard work of questioning the institutional systems left behind by a white supremacist who served as president of the University of California from 1919 to 1923 and as a member of the faculty for decades. We challenge all campus leaders, faculty, staff, and students to think systematically

about what more needs to be done to repair damage done by Barrows and to counteract the effects of centuries of systemic racism in this country.

- **This is an opportunity for resilience and empowering student-driven community building.** Student groups should be invited by the campus administration to curate public information, artwork (e.g., work from the activism by Anthony Williams and Bradley Afroilan), and programs to appropriately educate our campus community about Barrows' true legacy of white supremacy and also bring our community together to learn more about the enormous wealth of diversity in the people and cultures that Barrows degraded, marginalized, and tried to repress throughout his lifetime. This moment should be empowering, healing, and educational.

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July 10, 2020

transmitted via electronic mail to building-name-review@berkeley.edu

Dear Members of the UC Berkeley Building Name Review Committee,

We endorse the conclusions in the July 2020 *Proposal to Un-Name Barrows Hall* [redacted].

The namesake of this building, David Prescott Barrows, is a symbol of racism that does not represent UC Berkeley's values and is particularly harmful for Black and Filipnx students, faculty, and staff. It is time to remove his name from this important building.

We also strongly endorse the sentiment expressed in the proposal that symbolic changes like building un-namings are necessary but not sufficient. As academic leaders we must find new ways to do the hard work of systematically counteracting the effects of centuries of institutional racism in this country.

Sincerely,

Paul Alivisatos, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

Raka Ray, Dean, Division of Social Sciences and Professor of Sociology and South Asian Studies